

## Athenian News :

O R,

## Dunton's Dracle.

From Saturday June the 3d, to Tuesday June the 6th, 1710.

*The Rhiming-Post, or a Poem on any Subject desir'd.*

CANDID READERS,

**T**O you I need not make any Apology for that Artless Habit in which this Rhiming-Post now appears, who very well know my constant Want of Health, and a necessary Experience in the Age's Humour; nor can you reasonably expect any extraordinary Strokes from one whose Thoughts are divided between so many various Afflictions, since Ovid himself, when condemn'd to Banishment, was forc'd to resign that Spirit of Poetry which animated all his Works, besides that of his de tristibus. Besides, I must desire your Patience to observe, that (the Verse I commonly use being a Kind of Dogrel) it is but natural that now and then it should run harsh and rugged; nor do I believe I have done amiss by forcing my self sometimes to be so very plain and familiar. As for the Rhime and Measure, tho' perhaps they may not always answer the strictest Law, yet I do not think it worth the While to make any Excuse for that, being Faults so inconsiderable that they are seldom reflected on, but by the meanest Sort of Criticks, (such as M. Smith, the Author of the British Apollo) who wants Judgment to discern the Intrigues of Humour and Invention, which are the principal Ingredients of a Poem, and which I must needs confess are here extremely deficient: For as this Rhiming-Post was most of it writ extempore, (and upon Subjects desir'd) so it presumes to kiss your Hand in its Native unpolish'd Shape, not having the least Thought or Word of it corrected.

I must confess, it seems unnatural, that one who came (almost) rhiming into the World, and has trotted (I won't say gallop'd) Pegasus ever since, should endeavour, as I have done, to disparage his own Profession. However, the Poets of this Age, whom it most concerns, I hope will not take it unkindly of me, since doing thus, I only follow the Example they have given me; for in that long Time of my Residence in London, among all the Poets I was in Company with, I heard little else besides their Complaints and unmerciful Damnings both of the Times and one another: Neither have I seen a modern Play but either began or ended in the same Tune. Some few of which I have, for Example Sake, here presum'd to quote.

*In the Prologue to Aurenzebe.*

**T**HE Clergy thrives, and the litigious Bar,  
Dull Heroes fatten by the Spoils of War.  
All Southern Vices (Heaven be prais'd) are here,  
But Wit's a Luxury you count too dear.

*In the Epilogue to the Libertine.*

**S** Death! What a Devil wou'd you have us do?  
Each take a Prison, and there humbly sue,  
Angling for single Money in a Shoe?

*In the Epilogue to Monsieur Rogooc.*

**I** Am a Poet, and I'll prove it plain,  
Both by my empty Purse, and empty Brain.  
I've other Reasons to confirm it too;  
I've great, and Self-conceits of all I do.  
As for my Play, I pawn'd it to some Cit,  
At least Six Months before my Play was writ:  
But when the Third Day comes, away I run,  
Knowing that then in Shoals come all my Duns.  
If these Things make me not a proper Poet,  
He that has better Title, let him shew it.

*In the Prologue to Theodosius.*

**O**N Poets only no kind Star e'er smil'd,  
Curst'd Fate has damn'd 'em, ev'ry Mother's Child:  
Therefore he warns his Brothers of the Stage  
To write no more to an ingrateful Age.  
Think what penurious Masters you have serv'd;  
Tasso ran mad, and noble Spencer starv'd.  
Turn then, whoe'er thou art, that canst write well,  
Thy Ink to Gall, and in Lampoons excell.  
Forswear all Honesty, traduce the great,  
Grow impudent, and rail against the State;  
Bursting with Spleen, abroad thy Pasquils send,  
And chuse some Libel-spreader for thy Friend.  
The Wit and Want of Timon point thy Mind,  
And for thy Satyr-subject chuse Mankind.

*In the Prologue to the unhappy Favourite.*

**T**HE Merchant joyful with the Hopes of Gain,  
Ventures his Life and Fortunes on the Main;  
D d But



But the poor Poet oft'ner does expose  
More than his Life, his Credit, for Applause.

*In the Epilogue to the same Play.*

LET those who call us wicked, change their Sense,  
For never Men liv'd more on Providence:  
Not Lott'ry Cavaliers are half so poor,  
Nor broken Cits, nor a Vacation Whore;  
Not Courts, nor Courtiers living on the Rents  
Of the Three last ungiving Parliaments.  
So wretched, that if Pharaoh could divine,  
He might have spar'd his Dream of Seven lean Kine,  
And chang'd the Vision for the Muses Nine.

*And a little after.*

'Tis not our Want of Wit that keeps us poor,  
For then the Printer's Press would suffer more:  
Their Pamphleteers their Venom daily spit,  
They thrive by Treason, and we starve by Wit.

Now (*bating some prophane Expressions*) I don't blame these Gentlemen for thus inveighing against the thing to which they owe their Ruin; nor were it to any Purpose to endeavour to conceal a Truth so generally taken Notice of: For who is ignorant of this, that a Man, in all Professions, except that of Poetry, may with Honour advance a Livelibood? But that (tho' it may be sometimes found proper for the Divertisement of those few who have Leisure to read it) was ever known to be most unprofitable to the Authors; for few or none have been advanc'd by it. tho' many have been hindred by this Art of Versifying, from making their Fortune otherwise in the World. Tea, this Profession is grown so vile and abject, that whereas others count it an Honour to be call'd Physicians, Barristers, or the like; these are offended with the very Name of Poet: For which Reason this Art is in Danger to be confin'd to the Corners of Streets, to serve only for Songs and Ballads. Hence it was that Ovid was so severely punish'd by his Father, to make him leave off this Art, which prov'd so unlucky to him, that he became of a rich Roman Knight, a miserable Exile among Barbarians. Hence Plato was pleas'd to banish it out of his imaginary Common-wealth. And Philip, the first Christian Emperour, deny'd them those Immunities which he granted to all others.

But whatever Encouragement or Fame may be justly due to First-rate Poets, (such as Cowley, Dryden, Garth, &c.) yet sure I am, "when a Fool versifies and a Goose dances, there is Sport alike. He is twice an Ass that's a Rhiming one. He is something the less unwise that's unwise but in Prose. Nothing is more worthy of Pity than bad Poets: Tho' they admire all they write, it often happens they perceive themselves to be their only Admirers. If this does not reclaim 'em, then they are vex'd to live in such an unapprehensive Age where Men can judge of nothing but according to their own particular Humour and Fancy. This Thought so incenses 'em, that they resolve, for despising their Poetry, to scourge 'em with it; and as angry Children think they are reveng'd when they hit you with all their Might; so the poor Poet fancies he lashes his Enemies with his Satyrs; but when he finds himself deceiv'd, and that what he design'd should fret 'em, on the contrary does only move their Laughter. He hates 'em for that Dulness and unmannerliness which himself is guilty of, continues doating on his Conceptions all his Life, dies out of Charity with all the World, and so by Consequence is damn'd. Numerous Instances of this Nature offer themselves to my Pen, but I must take Care not to stretch my Preface too far, for Fear you should

reflect on it what was formerly said on Sir William Davenant's Preface before his Gondibert.

A Preface to no Book, a Porch to no House,  
Here is the Mountain, but where is the Mousse?

*I shall therefore now introduce my Rhiming-Post with*

*A Farewel to the Follies of Youth; being a Continuation of the Dying-Farewells mention'd in Dunton's Oracle, Numb. 1.*

Farewel, all sublunary Joys be gone,  
You empty Shadows I once doated on.  
All Earth's evanid Glories I despise,  
Here are no Objects that shall tempt my Eyes.  
I am resolv'd to follow and pursue  
The Heav'n which Faith, not Fancy leads me to.  
'Tis thee, O God, I will design, who art  
The Peace and Portion of my better Part.  
Farewel ye fruitless Vanity of Youth,  
The frothy Fits of Pride and Passion both:  
Farewel those thrifty and ambitious Crimes  
Which pass for Virtues in these modish Times.  
What's an Estate, that I should toil and sweat,  
Or pawn this Happiness to purchase it?  
Misers are happy only in their Dream,  
When fancy'd Heaps of Riches real seem;  
For when the Visionary Cheat is o'er,  
With a rich Sigh they sigh for waking poor.  
What is a Name? 'Tis Nothing in Disguise,  
A Bubble dress'd in gilded Vanities;  
There's nothing solid in it to be found,  
'Tis empty Things that yield and spread a Sound:  
The Noise that does from Men's Applauses come  
Is like the empty Loudness of a Drum.  
These Toys so highly priz'd, so much embrac'd  
By some, I once more bid Farewel in Hast:  
Farewel my Friends and dear Enjoyments too,  
Nay, I must bid my former self Adieu.  
I have but one Thing of this World to crave,  
And that's the parting Kindness of a Grave:  
If I must pay for't, I'll not give Receipt,  
But leave my Body Pris'ner for the Debt.  
For other Farewells that my Life must close,  
(For there's Three Thousand yet to make in Prose)  
That all the World may have—a dying Greet,  
I'll take my Leave of ev'ry Thing I meet,  
And be as grave as in my Winding-sheet.

Mr. Dunton,

Understanding you have promis'd in your Weekly Oracle to write a Poem upon any Subject desir'd, I desire you'd write an Epitaph of Four Lines to be carv'd on the Tomb-stone of Mrs. Mary Cock, late Wife of Mr. Elias Cock of Chesham, Laceman, and direct 'em to the Bull and Mouth in St. Martins, for your hearty Friend and Servant—M. G.

*Dunton's*



## Dunton's Answers

S I R,

I Formerly writ an Elegy (undesir'd) upon the late and much lamented Death of Mrs. Mary Cock of Chesham, which you'll find in my Book entitl'd— Athenianism, or Six Hundred new Projects in Prose and Verse;— and now at your Request I have sent you an Epitaph to be carv'd on her Tombstone; being only Four Lines that I writ extempore, and sent by the same Bearer that brought me your Letter; and therefore I hope the Haste they were writ in, and your Friendship, will excuse all the Defects that you find in 'em, or at least, convince you how much I am— Yours to command— J. Dunton.

An extempore Epitaph upon Mrs. Mary Cock, late of Chesham in Bucks.

HERE lies a WIFE, and such a Friend,  
As all lament, and all commend;  
Or if all Virtue's you'd comprize,  
Say, here interr'd MARIA lies.

The Ladies Liquor.

I.

WItHIN this Bottle's to be seen,  
A scarlet Liquor that has been  
Born of the Royal Vine;  
We but nick-name it when we call  
Plain Clarret, 'tis so sparkling all,  
'Tis richer much than Wine.

II.

'Tis Ladies Liquor: Here one might  
Feast both his Eye and Appetite,  
With Beauty and with Taft,  
Cherries and Roses which you seek.  
Upon your Mistress Lip and Cheek  
Are here together plac'd.

III.

Physicians may prescribe their Whey  
To purge our Reins and Brains away,  
And clarify the Blood;  
That cures one Sickness with another,  
This routs by Wholesale altogether,  
And drowns them in a Flood.

IV.

This Poets make, else how could I  
Thus ramble into Poetry?  
Nay, and write Sonnets too?  
If there's such Pow'r in Junior Wines,  
To make one venture upon Lines,  
What could Canary do?

V.

Then squeeze the Vessel's Bowels out,  
And deal it faithfully about,  
Crown each Hand with a Brimmer;  
Since we're to pass thro' this Red Sea,  
Our Noses shall our Pilots be,  
And ev'ry Soul a Swimmer.

A Welcome (or rather Defiance) to Death.

WElcome, sweet Death, I love thy cold Embrace,  
The Rich and Bad cannot endure thy Face;  
Life is a hasty Passage unto Death,  
Our Life dies on until our vital Breath  
Expire, and that's the very last of Death.  
To come into the World one Way we have,  
A Thousand Ways to hasten to the Grave.  
The Day of Death is secret kept, that we  
Might ev'ry Day suspect that Day to be.  
As I am not ashamed to live, so I,  
Can never truly be afraid to die.  
Oh Death! oh watchful Death! thou look'st for me,  
I am prepar'd, O Death! and look for thee.

Love's Duel, out of Anacreon.

CUpid all his Arts did prove,  
To invite my Heart to love:  
But I always did delay,  
His mild Summons to obey;  
Being deaf to all his Charms,  
Strait the God assumes his Arms.  
With his Bow and Quiver, he  
Takes the Field to duel me.  
Armed like Achilles, I  
With my Shield and Spear defy  
His bold Challenge: As he cast  
His golden Darts, I as fast  
Catch'd his Arrows in my Shield,  
'Till I made him leave the Field.  
Fretting and disarmed, then  
Th' angry God returns again,  
All in Flames; 'stead of a Dart,  
Throws himself into my Heart;  
Useless, I my Shield require,  
When the Fort is all on Fire:  
I in vain the Field did win,  
Now the Enemy's within.  
Thus betray'd, at last I cry,  
Love! th' hast got the Victory.

LOVE a Spirit.

I Told Celinda t'other Day,  
As in a pleasant Bow'r we sat,  
Sporting and chatting Time away,  
Of Love, and of I know not what;  
That Love's a Spirit, some maintain,  
From whom (say they) we're seldom free;  
He gives us both Delight and Pain,  
Yet him we neither touch, nor see.  
But when I view (said I) your Eyes,  
I can perceive he thither skips;  
He now about them hov'ring flies,  
And I can feel him on your Lips.

On a Lady that turn'd her Check when I went to kiss her.

I.

AND why this Coyness, Lady mine?  
What needs all this adoe?



'Tis but a Swap, my Lips for thine,  
A gentle Touch, and go:  
Nay, let such Kisses still be kept,  
Let him that is deny'd  
Your Lip, and will your Cheek accept,  
Lie only by your Side.

## II.

I hate to kiss your Drugs and Foils,  
'Tis Flesh that I affect,  
And you whose Art your Nature spoils,  
I like not, but suspect.  
Pray why's your Mouth more shy than mine?  
Am't I as sound as you're?  
My Lips let in as much good Wine,  
And send out Words as pure.

## III.

Expect no Courtship more from me,  
Nor Words, that you and I  
May in our Judgments plainly see,  
Make but a ranting Lye:  
Leave these coy Humours and be plain;  
Deny, or else be free,  
Look not for Love w'thout Love again,  
I'll kiss, if you'll kiss me.

*The following Translations and Paraphrase were sent by a young Gentleman from Cambridge.*

*Hor. L. 1. Ode 1.*

**M**ÆCENAS, whose high Extract springs,  
From a long Race of antient Kings,  
My sweetest Guardian, whom I chuse,  
The best Protection of my Muse.  
Some in the swift Pursuit of Praise,  
Delight the *Olympian* Plains to raise;  
Whom, as their heated Chariots roll,  
To miss with reeking Wheels the Goal,  
And the fresh Glory of the Prize,  
Ranks with the immortal Deities——

Me with more silent Pleasures fir'd,  
Joy, the Prize of the Inspir'd,  
Starts from the Croud; I the cool Grove,  
And dancing Nymphs and Satyrs love,  
So that *Euterpe* don't refuse,  
Her Inspirations to my Muse;  
Nor *Polyhymnia* restrains  
Her speaking Lyre and *Lesbean* Strains:  
But if you'll fix me in the Throng  
Of Poets, fam'd for Lyrick Song,  
My prouder Head shall threat the Clouds,  
And soaring, mingle with the Gods.

*Hor. Sat. 1. Qui sit Macenas, &c.*

**W**Hence is the Cause, *Macenas*, that Mankind,  
Live discontented in the State assign'd,  
Which Reason recommends, or Chance confers,  
But every Man his Neighbour's Life prefers?  
Ah happy Mariners! the Soldier cries,  
Spent with old Age, and worn with Exercise.  
The Merchant, when the threatening North grows high,  
Praises the Soldier's happier Choice, for why,  
An Infant gives him Death, or Victory.

The Lawyer, when his Client at the Door  
Importunately calls, and knocks at Four,  
Blesses the Shepherd's Life, who may securely snore.  
The Country Farmer, who by Surety drawn,  
Once in a Year, perchance, comes up to Town,  
Applauds their happier Lives, and flights his own.  
Yea, shou'd I all their different Humours state,  
'Twou'd tire the long breath'd *Fabius* to relate.  
Not to grow tedious then, I'll cast the Cause  
Upon this Issue, and for once suppose  
That some descending God wou'd interpose.  
I've heard your several Prayers, and grant that you  
Who were the Soldier, be the Sailor now,  
And that the Lawyer turn a Shepherd too.  
Be quick, Why Pause you thus? They stand and slight  
The Proffer, tho' they may be happy by't.  
What Wonder then if angry *Jove* declares,  
That he will hear no more their murmuring Prayers?  
But to leave trifling; (tho' 'twill hardly hold)  
But Truth may sometimes be jocosely told;  
As Masters when they teach their little Boys,  
Tempt their fond Fancies with gay Gifts and Toys.  
——But Rallery apart: Not only he  
Who plows the Furrows, but who tempts the Sea,  
The perjur'd Inn-keeper, and Warrior too,  
Will tell you all, that all their Pains are due  
To coming Want, and that they only Toil  
In Youth, that they in Age may reap the Spoil.

*A Paraphrase on Rev. 21. From v. 1. to the 9th.*

**W**HEN lo? a sudden Change around ensu'd,  
And a fresh Scene of Heaven and Earth renew'd.  
The First quite disappearing were no more,  
Nor the Sea flow'd, nor Billows wash'd the Shoar.  
From upper Skies *Jerusalem* descends, (bends.  
And tow'rs this Globe of Earth, her glorious Way she  
The Vision falling flow, look'd heavenly fair,  
And glorious Workmanship stream'd in the Air.  
Dress'd like a Spouse, when to the Nuptial Bed  
Presented, in her costliest Robes she's led.  
Then straight a sudden Voice I heard— From hence,  
God with Mankind will pitch his Residence,  
And everlasting Peace and Amity Commence.  
He from all Eyes shall wipe unhappy Tears,  
And 'twage Men's bitter Sighs and boding Fears;  
For Pain shall cease, and Death it self expire,  
In the last Conflicts of the general Fire.  
Then seated on a radiant Throne, One spake,  
Behold, a brighter Heaven and Earth I make.  
'Tis done! I am the First and last of Things,  
In whom Praise centers, and from whence it springs.  
You whom the Thirst of Happiness inspires  
With sacred Wishes, and unstain'd Desires,  
Approach, and I will quench your amorous Fires.  
On you the cordial Streams I will bestow,  
Of Life, which shall like common Water flow.  
All you to whom the conquering Prize is given,  
Shall be the Sons of God, and Heirs of Heaven.  
Whilst Sinners, and the black unrighteous Train,  
Who with false Vows my spotless Altars stain,  
My angry Justice shall pursue and turn  
Into the Pool where Fire and Sulphure burn.

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